

BRIEFS

PLATT RELEASES OPEN LETTER ON CUTBACKS

RICHMOND, Va. (Special) — David Platt, president of the International Mission Board (IMB) of the Southern Baptist Convention in Richmond, Va., has released an open letter to Southern Baptists explaining the rationale behind plans to cut 600-800 personnel from the missionary sending agency. To read the letter in its entirety, visit bpnews.net/45432/imbs-platt-sends-open-letter-to-sbc-family.

GUIDESTONE GIVES TIPS ON CURRENT MARKETS

DALLAS (BP) — GuideStone Financial Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention has produced a video outlining the nation's current market volatility and responses that long-term investors should consider including remaining calm in the face of daily news, keeping a long-term focus on investments, and maintaining diversification in age- and risk-appropriate investments. Participants can view this and other videos, articles, and links on current news topics related to the markets at GuideStoneFunds.com, under the News & Insights tab.

'WAR ROOM' RESOURCES AVAILABLE AT LIFEWAY

NASHVILLE (BP) — LifeWay Christian Resources has partnered with Christian filmmakers Stephen and Alex Kendrick to provide churches with resources to accompany their latest film, *War Room*, which spotlights prayer, its power, and purpose. Resources include the books, *The Battle Plan for Prayer*, and *Fervent*; a pair of children's books, *Prayer Works: Prayer Training and Strategy for Kids*, and *Peter's Perfect Prayer Place*; and *War Room Bible Study and Church Campaign Kit* that includes a five-week small group study, sermon outlines, and promotional items. For more information about *War Room* resources, visit Lifeway.com/WarRoom.

'Attack on religious liberty'

Federal judges slam ruling against Guidestone

DALLAS (BP) — Five judges on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 10th Circuit in Denver have sharply criticized the July decision of a three-judge panel of the court that ruled against GuideStone Financial Resources in a case involving the Obama administration's mandate on provision of contraceptives that could cause abortions.

In a rare move, the entire 10th Circuit on its own initiative took a vote on whether to reconsider the panel decision. When the vote narrowly fell short, five of the 19 judges released a dissenting opinion Sept. 3 that describes the three-judge panel's decision as "a dangerous approach to religious liberty" that is so "clearly and gravely wrong" that it "will not long survive."

The Obama administration's abortion/contraception mandate requires ministries that are not churches or integrated auxiliaries of churches to provide abortion-causing drugs and devices in their health plans or face crippling fines.

The parties in the case have argued that a false "accommodation" offered by the government still forces the ministries to violate their faith.

GuideStone, along with churches and a very nar-



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Financial Resources

"This quickly growing repudiation is very important and provides further proof that the U.S. Supreme Court should hear our appeal."

Harold R. Loftin Jr.

general counsel for GuideStone

row class of other ministries, are exempt from the mandate and its penalties but hundreds of evangelical Christian ministries that rely on GuideStone for their health benefits are not exempt and must comply with the government's system or pay enormous fines.

"This is extraordinary," Harold R. Loftin Jr., general counsel for GuideStone, said of "the powerful opinion from these five judges... who have rejected the government's attack on religious liberty."

Loftin added, "This quickly growing repudiation is very important and provides fur-

ther proof that the U.S. Supreme Court should hear our appeal."

The three-judge panel of the 10th Circuit Court ruled 2-1 against GuideStone on July 14. An injunction protecting affected ministries from the mandate's penalties remains in effect.

GuideStone and its co-plaintiffs, Truett-McConnell College and Reaching Souls International, have filed an appeal to the Supreme Court alongside the Little Sisters of the Poor, a Roman Catholic ministry.

A decision on whether the Supreme Court will hear the appeal is expected by early October.

Plan for Pastor Appreciation Month

ALPHARETTA, Ga. (BP) — Imagine if pastors received the same support and accolades reserved for successful college football coaches. While many churches encourage their pastors well, and some do an exemplary job, many pastors feel closer to last year's fired head coach than the man with the post-game TV show.

Enter Pastor Appreciation Month in October across the Southern Baptist Convention. Pastors need demonstrated love and support, perhaps as much as any other vocation. The stresses of accepting spiritual responsibility for congregations are well-documented in Scripture by the Apostle Paul and today in countless surveys.

Pastors need support. "Just as Moses needed an Aaron and



Hur to lift his weary arms in battle (Exodus 17), so every pastor needs encouragement from his church to lift his arms in the spiritual battle facing the local church," said Michael Lewis, executive director for the North American Mission Board (NAMB) pastoral care and development office in Alpharetta, Ga.

"Pastors, whose jobs are all about 'giving out,' are 'wearing out.' Pastors need affirmation and encouragement from their congregations. Serving as a local church pastor is filled with pressing demands."

As a former pastor, Lewis understands those pressures.

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SEP 17 2015



From the editor

WILLIAM PERKINS

History marches on

The news was glum and the images heartbreaking as desperate refugees raced across the border while there was still time. Of course, countries into which the masses were fleeing offered lip service sympathy but protested that they couldn't accept yet another wave of impoverished, stateless refugees. One ambassador observed that his country didn't have a racial problem and was not interested in importing one.

The fear in the faces of the refugees was palpable as they handed their children over to complete strangers in hopes their little ones would reach safety even if they couldn't. The dark clouds of coming pogroms were gathering. No one knew how long they had left, so they departed with nothing on which to build a new life that they couldn't envision anyway in a land completely foreign to them and, in many cases, hostile to them. The only alternative was certain death for themselves and their children. Maybe not tomorrow, but certain.

Those are not news stories from last week, when panicked refugees from Syria and other countries were driven out in front of invading and victorious ISIS Muslim extremists who kill even other Muslims who don't believe exactly as they do. No, those headlines are from 1938-1939, as murderous extremists of another kind prepared in their day and time for world domination and the mass elimination of those who didn't believe exactly as they did.

The intent of the refugees' tormentors was as clear then as it is today. History does repeat itself, if only we pay attention. Before the Nazis finally met their demise at the end of World War II, the Axis powers of which they were a part (primarily Germany, Italy, and Japan) were responsible for possibly more than 100 million human casualties.

In our day, ISIS forces assumed control of the Syrian city of Palmyra in May. Virtually the entire religious minority population of that ancient Roman city, including Christians, is unaccounted for and assumed to have been either exterminated or driven out with nothing but the clothes on their backs.

Four thousand Christian families, numbering almost 120,000 people, fled the northeastern city

of Hassakeh in July as ISIS forces entered the area. Those Christians are reportedly huddling in the deadly heat of the open desert with no shelter and little water.

In late August in another venue of the ISIS military theater near the border with Turkey, ISIS fighters invaded several small villages and cut off all access to the town of Marea. The fate of Christians and other religious minorities in the area is unknown at present, but foreordained under ISIS rule.

The Mirror, a London-based newspaper, recently reported that ISIS bragged in one of its propaganda magazines named Dabiq that the group has set a goal of acquiring a nuclear weapon within the next twelve months.

In the meantime ISIS has announced a government, set up sharia (Muslim) law in the areas it controls, and issued its own currency backed by billions of dollars from oil revenues and bank confiscations in occupied territories. Look for the United Nations to formally declare the so-called Islamic State a country in the near future, with all the privileges and protections that go along with being a U.N. member.

History reveals to us, over and over, what the outcome of all this will be. Surely no one wants to contemplate World War III but these lovers of death and destruction, like the Nazis before them, are bent on global conquest and nothing less than the total redirection of the human race. Without a doubt, this would include the attempted eradication of Christianity.

All this tragedy and trauma seems so far away to most Americans, whose greatest loss is a poor showing by a favorite football team. Where our supermarkets have a dozen varieties of apples alone on which to feast. Where we have so much clean water that we can afford to flush it away. Where our biggest daily setback is rush-hour traffic on the interstate. Where our climate-controlled churches have cushions on those unbearably hard wooden pews.

We can quickly lose it all. That's the intention of our enemies, and the sooner the better as far as they're concerned.

It's time we started praying, don't you think? And for more Christians than we care to admit, this time it needs to be sincere.

Here to serve the churches

I had the privilege of meeting with executive directors of the Baptist state conventions in the Midwest earlier this year. I presented on how, together, we might best serve the churches in our region. We enjoyed a robust dialog after my presentation about how we might best accomplish these shared goals.

As I prepared for our time together, I was reminded of how similar our ministries are, and how many of our challenges and opportunities are common to us both. I also was reminded of how our constituency is one and the same: Southern Baptist churches. Thus, I spoke not about what they should do but what we should do and how, together, we can best serve in the years ahead and most effectively incorporate the millennial generation. Here are key points of what I shared:

Mission clarity

First, we must vigilantly maintain mission clarity. Like Midwestern Seminary, all ministries that are intended to serve the church must do just that — serve the church. Churches founded us, they fund us, and they expect us to serve them.

How we best serve the church will vary from entity to entity and state to state. Nonetheless, we must know the needs and expectations of the churches we serve. We should study them, listen to them, and give our energies and resources for them.

Meeting the needs and expectations of our churches may require fundamentally recalibrating longstanding organizational structures. If changes are needed, we must be willing to make them. If we do not, churches will eventually make those changes for us.

Most especially, in order to serve our churches we must know their ministers. We must seek out opportunities to listen to them, network with them, and truly consider their concerns and insights. We can and should take the relational initiative. After all, we are called to serve them, not vice versa.

Optimal stewardship

Given the financial limitations most every Christian organization experiences, optimal stewardship is a must. Mission clarity informs optimal stewardship. Inter-



Guest opinion with Jason Allen

rogating our own entities with the right questions is helpful to inform our stewardship. What do our churches expect us to accomplish on their behalf, and how do we most optimally steward our resources to that end?

These days, answering hard questions about perceived duplicative ministries, mission creep, and overstaffing, among other things, are standard operating procedure. These questions should be welcome and be humbly responded to with clear and compelling answers. The burden is on us, as stewards on behalf of our churches, to continually earn their trust.

Generational transition

Southern Baptists are now experiencing a generational transition that touches nearly every aspect of our work. At the national level, young entity heads like Russell Moore, president of the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission in Nashville; David Platt, president of the International Mission Board in Richmond, Va.; and myself as president of Midwestern Seminary in Kansas City, Mo., are indicative of this transition. At the state convention level, generational transition is the norm as well.

Incorporating the millennial generation does not give away our future. It ensures it. This must include more than trying to sell them on the Cooperative Program. The millennial generation, like every generation, will support that about which they are passionate.

A generation that has given up much to follow Christ and even more to pursue ministry is most impassioned by ministries that are bold for the Great Commission, the local church, and sound doctrine. As the late architect Daniel Burnham once observed, small thoughts

see ALLEN on p. 6

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Ky. county clerk defies judge, goes to jail

MOREHEAD, Ky. (BP and local reports) — Kentucky county clerk Kim Davis remained in jail this week for defying a federal judge's order to issue same sex marriage licenses, even as same sex couples received marriage licenses from assistants in her office.

William Smith and James Yates were the first of at least three same sex couples to obtain licenses from deputy clerks in Rowan County after Davis, citing her Christian beliefs, refused for two months to grant the documents.

Five of Davis' deputy clerks agreed Sept. 3 to issue marriage licenses to same sex couples. They told federal judge David L. Bunning in his Ashland, Ky., courtroom they would comply after he sent Davis to jail earlier in the day for contempt in refusing to obey his previous order to grant licenses to the couples.

"Davis is certainly free to disagree with the court's opinion, as many Americans likely do, but that does not excuse her from complying with it. To hold otherwise would set a dangerous precedent," Bunning wrote in his contempt of court citation.

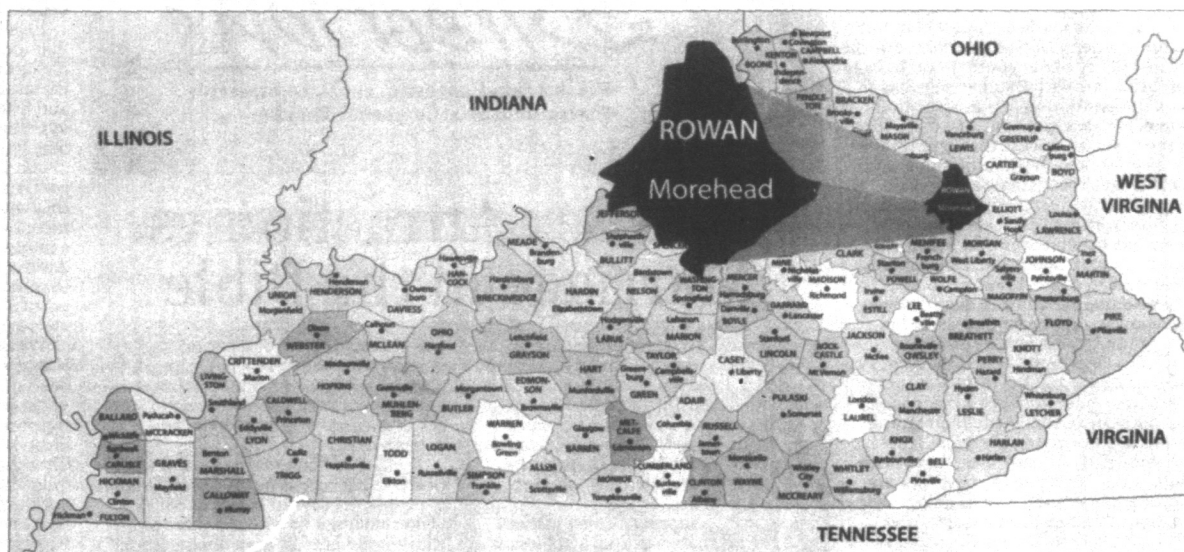
Bunning was nominated to the federal bench by George W. Bush. He is the son of former Major League Baseball Hall of Fame pitcher Jim Bunning. The elder Bunning also represented Kentucky as a Republican U.S. Senator for 12 years.

Davis will stay in jail for at least a week, the 14-year judge told Associated Press (AP), and he will reconsider his ruling after the deputy clerks have had the opportunity to obey his order. After the deputy clerks agreed to issue licenses, the judge offered to release Davis if she agreed not to interfere with the issuance of the licenses by her office staff, but she declined, AP reported.

Despite Davis' request for the Kentucky legislature to pass a bill to protect her rights of conscience while maintaining her clerk's job, Gov. Steve Beshear declined again Sept. 3 to call a special session, AP reported. The legislature is not scheduled to convene until January.

Religious freedom advocates, including Southern Baptist leaders, continued to call for Beshear, a Democrat, and the state legislature to act to resolve the dilemma.

Beshear "has stood idly by and offered no relief, despite pleas from thousands of Kentuckians who've asked him to provide leadership and seek legislative compromise in this conflict," Russell Moore, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC) in Nashville, and Andrew Walker, ERLC's



director of policy studies, wrote in a Sept. 4 post.

"This inaction on the part of the governor represents gross indifference to his duties as governor. The dramatic events and drastic steps in Kentucky are not necessary given the multiple ways that states can protect individual conscience while still upholding the rule of law," said Moore and Walker.

One of Davis' attorneys, Liberty Counsel Chairman Mat Staver, decried Bunning's jailing of Davis, a punishment the judge inflicted despite a request by lawyers for the same sex couples that she only be fined.

"Are we not more tolerant, more rational than we appear to the outside world today?" Staver said in a Sept. 4 statement issued before holding a mid-afternoon news conference. "Is this the kind of America we want, where good people are imprisoned because of their Judeo-Christian beliefs and values?"

"I do not think this is the America people want. Yesterday was a tragic day in America. What the future holds, we do not know but yesterday was a turning point one way or another. The future is yet unwritten. It is up to the American people to decide."

The government could resolve this conflict by providing accommodations for county clerks with conscientious objections to issuing licenses to same-sex couples, Staver and other religious freedom advocates have said. Among the accommodations suggested in



DAVIS

"This inaction on the part of the governor represents gross indifference to his duties as governor. The dramatic events and drastic steps in Kentucky are not necessary given the multiple ways that states can protect individual conscience while still upholding the rule of law."

Russell Moore and Andrew Walker
Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission

Davis' case by Liberty Counsel are removing her name from marriage licenses and permitting the county's chief executive to issue licenses.

Davis' husband Joe was at the county clerk's office Sept. 4 and said his wife was in good spirits after spending the night in jail, according to AP.

"She's not going to resign at all," Joe Davis said while holding a sign that read, "Welcome to Sodom and Gomorrah." He added, "It's a matter of telling Bunning he ain't the boss."

The Davises still support her deputy clerks, he said. He ate with them Thursday at a restaurant, AP reported, and said he told them, "I loved them and I was proud of them."

One deputy clerk, Kim Davis' son Nathan Davis, refused to agree to issue marriage licenses.

Smith and Yates, the first same sex couple to receive a marriage license in the eastern Kentucky county, had been turned away five times by Davis' office before Sept. 4.

Davis' jailing is the latest fallout from the U.S. Supreme Court's June 26 decision legalizing same sex marriage nationwide. It came three days after the high court denied her request to block enforcement of the younger Bunning's order.

She had earlier appealed the order to the U.S. Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals in Cincinnati, but the judge's order remains in effect while her appeal is considered.

The Supreme Court's 5-4 ruling heightened concerns among religious liberty advocates regarding the threat legalized same sex marriage poses to Christian individuals and institutions, as well as other defenders of biblical, traditional marriage.

The Supreme Court's opinion prompted some county clerks to resign their jobs rather than issue licenses to same sex couples, including in Mississippi, while others have held onto their jobs while refusing to provide licenses.

In the private sector, some businesses were closed even before the Supreme Court ruling as a result of the owners' refusal to compromise their belief that marriage is only between a man and a woman. Wedding vendors such florists, photographers and bakers have been especially vulnerable in states where same sex marriage was already legal.

In their Sept. 4 blog post, Moore and Walker summarized the four issues involved in Davis' case this way:

■ "The events in Kentucky are the result of judicial overstep on the part of the Supreme Court.

■ Secondly, government inaction by both the Kentucky legislative and executive branches has failed to resolve this conflict where it feasibly could.

■ Third, needless escalation by Judge Bunning on arresting Mrs. Davis for an unspecified amount of time has placed an otherwise law-abiding citizen in prison.

■ Fourth, in this dispute, there are differences concerning religious liberty when it involves government employees and private citizens."

The blog post is available at erlc.com/article/need-we-jail-each-other-over-marriage-licenses.

Davis, a Democrat, has been described in news reports as an Apostolic Christian. She actively participates in her church and leads a weekly Bible study at a local jail, according to a legal document filed with the federal court.

She has been married four times, according to court records obtained by U.S. News and World Report. The most recent of her three divorces came in 2008, the magazine reported Sept. 1.

Davis became a Christian more than four years ago after attending church in response to the dying wish of her mother-in-law, Davis said in a Sept. 1 written statement.

"There I heard a message of grace and forgiveness and surrendered my life to Jesus Christ," she said of that 2011 service. "I am not perfect. No one is, but I am forgiven and I love my Lord and must be obedient to Him and to the Word of God."

The ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court this summer declaring that same sex marriages are legal is possibly the most destructive, disruptive, and damaging decision ever to be made by the high court. It was actually not a decision made on legislation, but rather a redefinition of marriage. For the entire history of our country and in fact, centuries farther back, marriage has been understood clearly as a relationship between a man and a woman. Most of the thought process through the ages has been rooted in what the Bible says: "God created them male and female." In the unfolding relationship, God brought together one man and one woman. It was a gift from heaven and became the building block upon which civilizations have stood for millennia.

The Supreme Court ruling removed the boundaries of what marriage has been and not only invited same sex couples to marry, it opened the door for the discussion and the litigation over what else can be considered marriage. The Supreme Court made their ruling on the basis of giving everyone marriage equality. Already there have been those who want to go to court that are creating a larger circle of marriage with a man and two or three women, and what keeps them from being equal in the relationship?

The decision came about under the onslaught of pressure from the LGBT movement (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender). It was aided and encouraged by the positioning of same sex marriage as a civil rights issue as opposed to having any moral context for society. It is very probable that for our country, removing those parameters of what marriage has always been will allow marriage to be something new that we do not even know where it will now go. The foundational structure of our society has been removed.

Of course, there were strong, loud voices calling for this equality, not the least of which was the President of the United States who came to the office holding to the biblical view of one man and one woman and in mid-presidential service changed his mind. The only problem is that God's plan did not change for either the President's new view or the Supreme Court's new ruling. The day of the ruling, I received a phone call from a man who said, "Well, since the Supreme Court has ruled, what do



Same Sex Attraction vs. Marriage in the Bible

we do now?" I responded by saying, "What do you mean what do we do now? We do what we have been doing." He said, "Well, the Supreme Court says it is legal and that will be the new marriage form." I said, "No, we will continue doing what God has taught us in His Word." There are laws that support those decisions.

I know the Supreme Court justices have the ultimate word on legal issues in our land, but they do not have the ultimate word about all things pertaining to life. God created and ordained marriage and we will continue to teach His Word and focus on His best plan. It is that same court process that brought us the decision that has led to the legal destruction of over 50 million children through abortion. Because of the court's ruling in *Roe v. Wade*, is there any sense of acceptance that that is what we should do and practice? God forbid! We are people of the Book, the Word of the living God.

So, what does God say about homosexuality? Let me begin by just saying that homosexuality has long been with us. You do not have to read far in the Bible from the creation of man to Genesis 19, where you come face-to-face with radical homosexuality being pronounced and promoted in those twin cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. There is Lot, living in the midst of all of that degradation and corruption. It was wrong then and it is wrong now. God in His own way and time dealt with it back then, and God in His own way and time will deal with us. Clearly, one does not have to be a Bible

scholar in order to understand God's position. It is very clear in Scripture that God declares sex outside of marriage — either with the opposite sex or same sex attraction — as forbidden, and it is detrimental.

It is not difficult to understand what God is teaching His newly formed nation of people. He says in Leviticus 18:22, "Thou shalt not lie with mankind as with womankind. It is an abomination." As with the first couple in the Garden of Eden that faced a choice with all of the blessings that God had given them or choosing the one tree in the garden that God said to leave alone, you and I face choices in every area of our lives. To ignore God's clear teaching on the proper path for sexuality as opposed to a personal path can be to our own detriment.

Writing to the church in Corinth, the Apostle Paul said, "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God?" (1 Cor. 6:9). He had to see that neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate (referring to one aspect of homosexuality), nor abusers (referring to those who are taking advantage of people homosexually), nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revelers, nor extortioners shall inherit the Kingdom of God.

Now this is a vivid description of a number of groups including those that would abuse themselves in following a same sex attraction, but there is hope, there is salvation, and there is life change, for in verse 11 of 1 Corinthians 6 Paul says, "And such were some of you."

God can work in any of our situations to save us, bring us out, and give us new life — but not here in 1 Corinthians nor anywhere does the Bible promote the values and the rightness of homosexual behavior.

Across the land there are churches that identify themselves as "welcoming and affirming." These churches posture themselves as being open to homosexual and lesbian couples and individuals, but in reality they are more than just what may appear to be. I do not know of any of our churches that do not welcome people into their midst. I mean by that they may be drunkards, cheating in business, having an affair, or they may be a homosexual. Few churches lock their doors and kick out anybody that wants to come to worship and to hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which in itself is the transforming moment.

When it comes to affirming, the truth is that some churches not only welcome people but affirm a non-biblical lifestyle. Their position may be better defined as supporting, or even more, promoting a lifestyle that is outside the will of God. Churches that do that are not seeking to follow the teaching of Scripture and are not in friendly cooperation with the mission and the purpose of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. Should the Convention therefore disassociate itself from that church? The reality is that in their stated position of an unbiblical lifestyle, such churches have disassociated themselves from the Convention.

These are difficult days, for never in our history have we had leaders who have stepped so far from biblical truth. We have never seen our government so radically force individuals and institutions to embrace lifestyles with which they disagree. For the first time in our history, a person has been imprisoned for their view of marriage. Yet we must remain anchored to the unchanging Word of God. In a world of cultural chaos and marches and clamoring, we must not lose sight of the fact of who we are and what God has called us to do. We are all sinners and only Jesus can save any of us. The Good News from heaven is that anyone and everyone can come to Jesus and be saved. We stand with our living Lord and proclaim His message to all people everywhere.

The author can be contacted at directions@mbcb.org.

College News

► The Mississippi Alumni of **Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary** will meet noon, Oct. 27 in the Christian Life Center, First Church, Jackson. Tickets, \$10. Send money to Archie Herrin, 1962 National Guard Road, Columbia, MS 39429.

► **Blue Mountain College** is hosting the Northeast Mississippi Pastor's Conference Sept. 14. Registration, 8:30 a.m. Jim Futral, Reggie Bridges, Philip Caples, and Timothy Mims, speakers.

► **Mississippi College** has set fall enrollment records, enrolling 5,152

students. The school's new residence halls and the largest freshman class helped attract students.

► **William Carey University** has set fall enrollment records, with a total enrollment of 4,330 students. The Tradition campus has an enrollment of 1,154 students, and the School of Education broke records with an enrollment of 1,270 students.

► Tim Tebow, NFL quarterback, will be the keynote speaker at the **Blue Mountain College** fundraising gala at Bancorp-South Arena, Tupelo, April 12, 2016.

Staff Changes



TRINITY CHURCH, LAUREL, has called Ken Johnson as youth director. He is shown with wife Brandi and son Mason.



FIRST CHURCH, CARNES, has called Dallas Hickey as pastor. Shown are Hickey, wife Maria, Kierston Hickey, Malachi Hickey, Josiah Hickey, and Maciah Hickey.

What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the

HOUSE TOPS.

Matthew 10:27 NAS

September 10, 2015

HouseTops is a Baptist Record supplement produced by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's Communication Services.

COLLEGE STUDENT CONFERENCE 2015

OWN IT

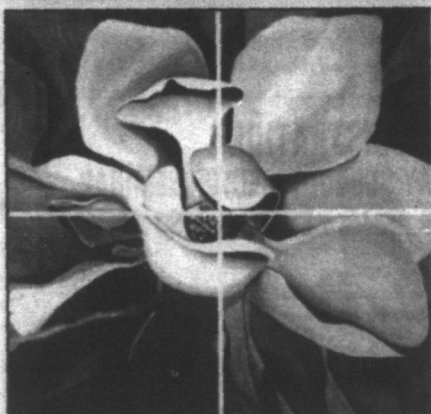
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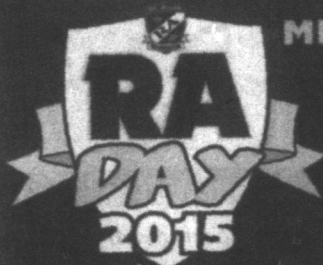
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MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE HOMECOMING

October 24, 2015
Mississippi College, Clinton, MS

Registration - noon
Program - 1:00 p.m. • Game - 3:00 p.m.

Contact Men's Ministry at
800-748-1651, Ext. 335

Bivocational/Small Church Ministers & Wives Council Meeting

October 26 @ 3:00 pm - 6:00 pm

Baptist Building
Skyroom

For more information contact the
Pastor/Leadership Development Dept. of the
MBCB at 800-748-1651.

BAPTIST WOMEN'S WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

November 2, 2015

Every year on or near the first Monday in November, Baptist women in about 130 countries gather to pray for one another. They use a program published by the Baptist World Alliance (BWA) Women's Department, which is composed of 7 continental unions representing 229 national Baptist women's organizations.

The Day of Prayer is for all Baptist women, not just those who are part of your women's organization. What would appeal to most women in your church—breakfast, Saturday retreat, evening meeting? Let that determine your date, place, and time.

MS WMU • 800-748-1651 • Ext. 319

Breakfast

AMD/Seminary Extension Directors Breakfast

October 27 @ 7:00 am - 8:00 am

Baptist Building, Chapel

Contact Pastor/Leadership Development Dept. at
800-748-1651 for more information.



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 - The Power of Small
 - Guarding The Heart for Effective Ministry
 - Outside the Walls
 - Groups Matter

• The "take aways" will be awesome!

SEPTEMBER 24, 2015 • First Baptist Church, Jackson
www.mbc.org/smallstrong

REGISTRATION

In order to accommodate the participants, advance registration is important. To register go to www.mbc.org/smallstrong and select REGISTER. The cost is \$20 per person. Those who register before August 1 will receive a 30% discount. Pastors who bring their Deacon Chairman may register the chairman at no costs to the church by selecting DEACON (special conditions apply) at www.mbc.org/smallstrong.

If getting online is a problem - call Carolyn Day, 601-292-3291 or 1-800-748-1651, Extension 291 and she will process your registration on your behalf.

CONTACT THE SUNDAY SCHOOL/SMALL GROUPS DEPT. 800-748-1651, Ext. 291

NSSDS REGISTRATION 2015 NATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL DIRECTOR SEMINAR SEPTEMBER 26, 2015 • CLINTON, MS

Cost per person: \$39 Registration Options:

1. Complete and photocopy this form for your records. Send original with check made payable to LifeWay Christian Resources and mail in a stamped envelope to: LifeWay Christian Resources - NSSDS, PO Box 24001, Nashville, TN 37202
2. Register online: lifeway.com/nssds
3. Or call: 800.254.2022

Additional information regarding schedule and directions to the seminar location can be found at lifeway.com/nssds.

To assist churches in making this training available to their directors, the Mississippi Baptist Convention will provide a post seminar reimbursement (one person per church) of \$19 which is ½ the registration cost. Payment made to the church or person that paid the registration fee.

Send registration receipt to:

Carolyn Day, PO Box 530, Jackson MS 39205

For more information contact the Sunday School/Small Groups Department of the MBCB at 800-748-1651, Ext. 291, or 601-292-3291, or E-mail cday@mbcb.org

Ministers' Wives CONFERENCE

OCTOBER 26, 2015
FBC, JACKSON,
5TH FLOOR

We welcome Diana Davis as our speaker. She enjoys encouraging ministry wives and training women in church leadership. Diana is a minister's wife for over 32 years. Minister's wife of Steve Davis, vice president of SBC's NAMB, South region, her newest publication is "6 Simple Steps: Find Contentment & Joy as a Minister's Wife." Ministers' wives are welcome to join us for an afternoon of great fellowship and fulfillment.



Register by contacting Cathy Taylor at cwtaylor@mbcb.org.

44th ANNUAL CHURCH LIBRARY MINISTRY CONFERENCE

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, GAITHERSBURG, MS

OCTOBER 2-3, 2015
REGISTRATION DEADLINE: SEPT. 18

Visit us Online at

<http://www.mbcb.org/business-services/communication-services/church-library-ministry/>

Register Online at:

<https://secure-q.net/EventOrg/EventOrgID=MBBaptLibConv&EventID=1996>

Contact Communication Services for more information at 800-748-1651, Ext. 378, or 601-292-3378, E-mail jchen@mbcb.org

SIDE *by* SIDE

Ever wonder how it might work to have both Sunday School and Small Groups? Ken Braddy and Rick Howerton - both of LifeWay are coming to Mississippi to share just how these two dynamic ministry tools can work Side By Side.

Hold a date....

Tuesday, November 10 - in Northwest MS (location to be determined)
Wednesday, November 11 - Grace Crossing Church, Canton, MS
Thursday, November 12 - William Carey University, Hattiesburg

Times in all three locations:
10 AM - 2 PM

No cost, no childcare, lunch will be provided.

For more information contact the Sunday School & Small Groups Department of the MBCB at 800-748-1651, Ext. 291.

FALL TRAIL RIDE 2015

NOVEMBER 13-14, 2015

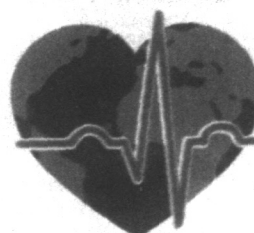
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October 16-17, 2015

Garaywa Camp & Conference Center

Program fee \$15 (includes CEU fee). There are additional fees for housing and meals.

To register: You call/E-mail Tammy Anderson for a registration form or download a form at www.mbcb.org (go to events and select MS BNF Retreat to find the form). Deadline to register is October 2, 2015. No refunds after October 2. Substitutions will be allowed.

For more information please contact Tammy Anderson in the MS WNU office at 601-292-3323 or E-mail tanderson@mbcb.org.



2015 Auditions for the 2016 Mississippi Baptist All-State Youth Choir and Orchestra. Open to 9th-12th graders involved in the music ministry of MS Southern Baptist Churches.

PLEASE REGISTER 2 WEEKS PRIOR TO AUDITION.

Saturday, September 12, 2015
10:30 A.M. - 1:00 P.M.
FBC Columbia

Sunday, September 13, 2015
1:30 - 4:00 P.M.
FBC Long Beach

Thursday, September 17, 2015
4:00 - 7:00 P.M.
Fairview BC, Columbus

Sunday, September 20, 2015
1:30 - 4:00 P.M.
North Oxford BC, Oxford

Thursday, October 1, 2015
4:00 - 7:00 P.M.
FBC, Meridian

Saturday, October 17, 2015
1:00 - 4:00 P.M.
Baptist Building

Sunday, October 18, 2015
2:00 - 5:00 P.M.
Baptist Building

For more information contact the Church Music Department of the MBCB at 800-748-1651, Ext. 267, or 601-292-3267, E-mail cwtaylor@mbcb.org.

Pray this day for...

September 11-24, 2015

"praying at all times in the Spirit... To that end keep alert with perseverance, making supplication for all the saints..."

Ephesians 6:18 (ESV)

Pray for: **John & Melinda Kyzar**, missionaries ministering to European Peoples through personalization, church/home outreach & evangelism.

Pray for: **Timothy & Rebecca Lightsey**, missionaries ministering to American Peoples through strategy coordination, church/home outreach & evangelism.

Pray for: **Asbury & Jeannie Martin**, missionaries ministering to American Peoples through church/home outreach & evangelism.

Pray for: **Robert & Janice Mooney**, missionaries ministering to European Peoples through strategy coordination, church/home outreach & evangelism.

Pray for: **Stephen & Svetlana Parish**, missionaries ministering to European Peoples through strategy coordination, church/home outreach & evangelism.

Pray for: **Kevin & Brenda Peacock**, missionaries ministering to European Peoples through theological education, church/home outreach & evangelism.

Pray for: **John & Sarah Perkins**, missionaries ministering to European Peoples through mission support, church/home outreach & evangelism.

Pray for: **Michael & Sarah Prewitt**, missionaries ministering to European Peoples through church planting, church/home outreach & evangelism.

Pray for: **Eugenia & Trac Putnam**, missionaries ministering to European Peoples through church planting.

Pray for: **Steven & Nickolee Roberts**, missionaries ministering to Sub-Saharan African Peoples through church planting, church/home outreach & evangelism.

Pray for: **Steven & Ruth Robertson**, missionaries ministering to Southeast Asian Peoples through financial administration, church/home outreach & evangelism.

Pray for: **C. & Marleen Robinson**, missionaries ministering to Sub-Saharan African Peoples through business management, church/home outreach & evangelism.

The IMB missionaries listed in the HouseTops prayer calendar are currently active in 2-4 year terms or in career service.



COOPERATIVE PROGRAM DINNER

THURSDAY | OCTOBER 1 | 6:30 P.M.

Harrisburg Baptist Church, Tupelo

PASTORS, STAFF, CHAIRMAN OF DEACONS,
FINANCIAL/BUDGET CHAIRMEN AND SPOUSES

DR. FUTRAL, SPEAKER

NO COST, BUT YOU MUST RSVP TO USA LEAVELL AT 601-292-3347
OR LEAVELL@MBCB.ORG BY FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 25.

RICK BLYTHE, DIRECTOR OF CP/STEWARDSHIP PROMOTION

FOR INFORMATION CONTACT THE
STEWARDSHIP/CP PROMOTION DEPT. OF THE MBCB AT
800-748-1451 EXT. 347 OR 601-292-3347

11/5/98
Mr. Campbell
Parents: T & G
European Peoples

11/8/14
Miss Mary Grace
Parents: J & C
Restricted

11/7/02
Mr. Jon Thomas
Parents: J & C
Restricted

11/15/96
Miss Marissa
Parents: David & Laurie
American Peoples

11/15/03
Mr. David
Parents: D & M
European Peoples

11/19/98
Mr. Taylor
Parents: R & C
American Peoples

11/30/03
Mr. Josiah
Parents: T & G
European Peoples

11/26/08
Miss Abigail
Parents: L & B
European Cluster

Encourage an MK with a card!

PLEASE NOTE THE TIMING: Thank you for your love and support of MKs by sending Birthday cards! Because of the sending to other countries, there is a need to get cards sent a month ahead of birthday. As soon as the list is in the Baptist Record, please send the cards and not wait until a couple of weeks before the date of the birthday. It is posted two months ahead to give time to receive cards and then to mail them a month ahead of time to insure arrival around birthday. Again, thank you for being a blessing to so many with this ministry!

MISSISSIPPI BAPTISTS

NOTE: Church members may send a package of cards together; cards do not have to be sent individually to the WMU. Individual cards do not need postage stamps when sent as a package to MS WMU.

FOR SECURITY, cards will be forwarded. Please send all to: MBCB WMU MK Birthdays, PO Box 530, Jackson MS 39205.

Please include your return address on each card envelope. MKs and their parents may wish to send you an update or note of appreciation.

HOUSE TOPS

Just for the Record



SLAYDEN CHURCH, MARSHALL ASSOCIATION, honored Sunday School teachers, their apprentices, church staff, and their spouses with an appreciation dinner. Kathy Crawford, Sunday School director; Rusty Fair, pastor.

MS POSITIONS

RAWLS SPRINGS BAPTIST CHURCH IN HATTIESBURG, MS IS SEEKING A KEYBOARD INSTRUMENTALIST. Please submit resumes to Rawls Springs Baptist Church, 55 Rawls Springs Road, Hattiesburg, MS 39402.

TRINITY BAPTIST CHURCH IN VICKSBURG, MS IS SEEKING A YOUTH MINISTER. Please send resumes to Trinity Baptist Church Search Committee, 3365 Porters Chapel Rd., Vicksburg, MS 39180 or email Charlie Harris at C3harris@yahoo.com.

THOMPSON BAPTIST CHURCH SMITHDALE, MS IS SEEKING A PART-TIME ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT. Flexible scheduling, e-mail resume to tbcfinancial@yahoo.com.

ENON BAPTIST CHURCH IS SEEKING A BI-VOCATIONAL MINISTER OF YOUTH. Send resumes to 2804 Carrollton Rd Grenada, MS 38901 or email to enonbaptistchurch@outlook.com or call 662-226-0778.

GUNTER ROAD BAPTIST CHURCH IN FLORENCE, MS IS SEEKING A BI-VOCATIONAL PASTOR. Please submit resumes to Gunter Road Search Committee C/O Craig Dukes 2209 Woodland Place Florence, MS 39073 or cdukes@bellsouth.net.

THE TRI-COUNTY BAPTIST MISSION (LAWRENCE, MARION, AND WALTHAM BAPTIST ASSOCIATIONS) IS RECEIVING RESUMES FOR THE POSITION OF ASSOCIATE ASSOCIATIONAL MISSIONS DIRECTOR through October 31, 2015. Resumes can be mailed to PO Box 350, Columbia MS 39429 (attention Executive Committee), or emailed to tricountybaptistmissions@gmail.com.

BETHESDA BAPTIST CHURCH IN TERRY IS ACCEPTING RESUMES FOR A BI-VOCATIONAL MUSIC MINISTER. Please mail resumes to Bethesda Baptist Church, 13626 Midway Rd. Terry, MS 39170.

BUCATUNNA BAPTIST CHURCH IN CLARKE COUNTY IS ACCEPTING RESUMES FOR BI-VOCATIONAL OR FULL-TIME PASTOR. Please send resumes to: 10806 CR514, Meridian, MS 39301.

BETHEL BAPTIST CHURCH, A SMALL COUNTRY CHURCH BETWEEN DREW AND RULEVILLE, MISS., IN SUNFLOWER COUNTY, IS ACCEPTING RESUMES FOR THE POSITION OF BI-VOCATIONAL PASTOR. Please send resumes to P.O. Box 249, Drew, Miss. 38737.

CLASSIFIEDS

COVENANT BAPTIST CHURCH, COLLIERVILLE, TN SEEKS A FULL-TIME MINISTER OF CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES to provide leadership in developing and directing ministry to preschoolers and children from birth through twelve years old and their families. Send resumes no later than 10/31/15 to Personnel Committee, Covenant Baptist Church, P.O. Box 1165, Collierville, TN 38027-1165, or to drsam@mycbbc.org.

COVENANT BAPTIST CHURCH, COLLIERVILLE, TN SEEKS A FULL-TIME MINISTER OF STUDENTS, SINGLES, AND THEIR FAMILIES to provide leadership in developing and directing ministry to youth grades 7-12, college students, singles, and their families. Send resumes no later than 10/31/15 to Personnel Committee, Covenant Baptist Church, P.O. Box 1165, Collierville, TN 38027-1165, or to drsam@mycbbc.org.

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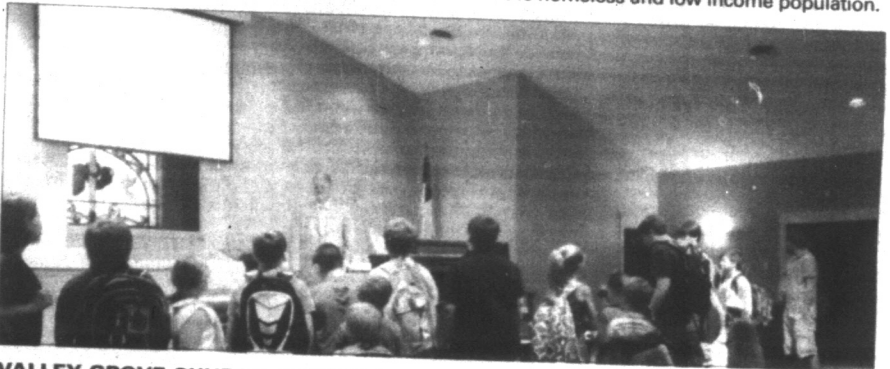
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Students from **CENTRAL CHURCH, MCCOMB**, went to Summer Missions Camp in Mobile, Ala., July 25 -Aug. 1, serving at mission sites throughout the week with Ransom Ministries of Mobile, providing meals, showers, and laundry service for the homeless and low income population.



VALLEY GROVE CHURCH, PONTOTOC COUNTY, recently held a Blessing of the Backpacks service. Staff and students were prayed over and a charge was given by pastor Greg Herndon. Participants also receive a backpack keychain.



MORGAN CHAPEL CHURCH, STURGIS, ordained Bryce Morgan as deacon. Shown are pastor Gary Roberson and Morgan.



INGOMAR CHURCH, NEW ALBANY, ordained Bryan McElroy as deacon Aug. 30. Shown are pastor Terry Cutrer, McElroy and his wife Sherra, Gary Allen, Bryan McElroy II, and Hannah McElroy.



ARLINGTON CHURCH, BOGUE CHITTO, held its annual missions recognition program Aug. 31. Shown are the participants. Matthew Green, pastor.

PASTOR

cont. from p. 1

One question a church can ask itself is, "Shouldn't our pastor have ...?" and fill in the blank with what church members take for granted or see their pastor truly needs. Take concrete steps to meet the need, which may include time off or a sabbatical, Lewis said.

Learn more about pastoral care and development at sendnetwork.com/pastoral-care-and-development.

As a way of encouraging more churches to participate in pastor appreciation month in October, NAMB is partnering with worship leaders Shane and Shane to provide a worship event for a selected church which best demonstrates the spirit of pastor appreciation. The recipient church will have the opportunity to host the free event as an additional thank-you for its pastor.

Church members can post photos on Instagram, Twitter, or Facebook with the hashtag #LiftMyPastor showing how they lift their pastor with one of NAMB's resources found at sendnetwork.com/pastors-appreciation. Posts should include details of why and how the church body chose to lift their pastor.

Each social media post that uses the hashtag #LiftMyPastor will be entered for the chance to bring Shane and Shane to their church for a worship night. Visit facebook.com/NAMB.SBC for details and more about entering your church's example of pastor appreciation.

ALLEN

cont. from p. 2

and little plans have no magic within them to inspire the hearts of men. This is especially true when it comes to the millennial generation.

As Southern Baptists, how well we enlist, equip, empower and embolden the next generation will do more than shape our future. It will determine whether we have one.

Value added

As Southern Baptists we have a great story to tell. The health of our entities, the unique effectiveness of the Cooperative Program, the training and deploying of thousands of ministers and missionaries, and so much more are compelling reasons to be committed Southern Baptists.

For Midwestern Seminary, I want our value to Southern Baptist churches to be so obvious and impactful that churches reflexively look to us to serve them. That is a worthy goal as well for our state conventions and every denominational entity.

A compelling vision is never in the past tense. We must project what we are doing now

and what, by God's grace, we intend to do in the future. If that vision does not resonate with our churches, we must be willing to correct course until it does.

Inherited brand loyalty left town long ago, and it is not likely to come back anytime soon. We must continually make our case before our churches and, thankfully, we have a makable case.

The executive directors with whom I visited are friends, colleagues, and cherished ministry partners. They and the entities they lead are doing good Gospel work, often under challenging financial circumstances. I was pleased to speak to them as a brother to brothers, and we had a good and spirited conversation as a result.

Both the national and state conventions serve the same constituency: Southern Baptist churches. The SBC will thrive inasmuch as our state conventions thrive, and vice versa. As we most faithfully listen to and serve those churches, we will most complement one another and our respective ministries will most flourish.

Allen is president of Midwestern Seminary in Kansas City, Mo. His commentary appears here courtesy of Baptist Press. Edited for style.

BIBL i O C I P H E R

DEZ NRT OHPLPN OHTGVNTR

TMHLTOOBX, NRGN PD NRT BGNNTL

NPCTO OECT ORGBB WTHGLN YLEC

NRT YGPNR, APJPA RTTW NE

OTWISPA OHPLPNO, GDW

WESNLPD TO EY WTJPBO.

YPLON NPCENRX YEIL:EDT

Clue: L = R

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Revelation 3:20

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Submission Guidelines

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. News items and/or photographs depicting benefits and activities for secular or outside organizations will not be published.

Preferred method: news may be submitted electronically to the e-mail address below, and must be included in the message segment of an e-mail form. Secondary method: news may be typewritten or neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper and mailed. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone. Due to ever-present virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments in JPEG format are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs must be submitted electroni-

cally via e-mail, as attachments in JPEG format. **Hard copy photographs mailed through the postal service will not be accepted.** Photographs must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, building, or object-only photographs will be printed. Photographs containing inappropriate gestures and objectionable clothing will not be published. Cell phone photographs and other low resolution items that do not reproduce well on newsprint are generally not publishable.

There is no guarantee that news items and/or photographs will be published, and unsolicited material will not be acknowledged or returned. All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date. Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. These guidelines are not meant to be exhaustive.

Submit news to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org.

Need a light?

Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life." (John 8:12)

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)
If you make a decision for Christ today, contact a local Southern Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

Made in His Image • Genesis 2:4-9, 15-18

After God's amazing creation, He put man in the Garden of Eden to work. Genesis 2:15 reads, "And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it." (KJV). Adam, which is Hebrew for "man," was given the task to work with "every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food..." (Genesis 2:9 KJV). From Adam's rib, God formed Eve to be Adam's helper. She was made to help Adam in His work and to be his companion. So Eve too was designed to work.

Part of Adam's duties was to name the animals. Genesis 2:20 reads, "And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field..." (KJV). Our image of Paradise is everyone lounging around and not working, but God placed man and woman in Paradise to work. Labor is part of who God is and we were made in His image.

We often debate the extent of rest on the Sabbath, asking what constitutes work on that day, and how much rest we should have. The ancient Hebrews debated this endlessly, and the New Testament Jews often criticized Jesus or His followers for doing what they considered work on the Sabbath. We rarely debate, however,

how much we should work. God worked six days in Creation and then rested the seventh day. Our lives should reflect that of our Creator, working 85% and resting 15%, as did the Lord. He made us to work and we are the most fulfilled when we are productive people, engaged in work and being fruitful.

The New Testament echoes God's design in Creation concerning work. Ephesians 4:28 reads, "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth," (KJV). After Jesus changed a life, Paul instructed the new creation to work. We are made in the image of God and God likes to work. Philippians 2:13 demonstrates, "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure," (KJV). Revelation 15:3 adds, "And they

singing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints," (KJV). Some great day in heaven, those who gained victory over the beast will sing with their harps the song of Moses. "Marvelous are thy works," they will proclaim. God loves to work and so should we. God still works in the hearts of

man, seeking the redemption of all. 2 Peter 3:9b reads, "The Lord is ... not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance," (KJV).

Further, John 15:8-9 reads, "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples. As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love," (KJV). Comparing His church to a vineyard, Jesus seeks not just "fruit," or "more fruit," but "much fruit" from every believer. Fruit in a believer's life only comes from work; spending time in the Word of the Lord, time with the Lord Jesus, time worshipping with other believers, time ministering to those in need, and time sharing His great news with others. All of that work is in addition to our jobs.

Ephesians 2:10 reads, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them," (KJV). God's creation reflected His image, that He worked six days. We were made in His image to work. This verse reveals that before He created the physical world, His image of us was that we believers would work. We were made to work. Acts 10:38 reads that, "Jesus ... went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him," (KJV). We were recreated in the image of our Father to be like Jesus, who went about doing good. We are not saved by our work, but are definitely saved to work. God is pleased and we are the most fulfilled when we serve the Lord. Let's get to work!



Explore the Bible with Rick Henson

Henson is pastor of Oakdale Church, Brandon.

God's Promise of Eternal Life • 1 John 5:6-13

The country of France was home to Jean Calment. According to guinness-worldrecords.com, this woman holds a distinguished place in history for her longevity: "The greatest fully authenticated age which any human has ever lived is 122 years 164 days by Jeane Louise Calment [1875-1997]."

Asked on her 120th birthday what she expected of the future, she replied, "A very short one."

We smile at this tongue-in-cheek answer. This quick-witted woman (who once met Vincent Van Gogh) realized death was probably imminent. Do you wonder what she may have thought as she pondered eternity? This concept is of utmost importance for all of us; we have only our current lifetime to make necessary preparations.

After last week's lesson on God's faithfulness during our earthly life, today's theme shows that God's faithfulness doesn't end when we've breathed our last. Our Lord's promise of eternal life gives us courage to face today, along with bright hope and settled peace in our dying moments.

The apostle John, possibly the last of the original group still living, penned the book of 1 John to encourage believers and clarify some fundamental and vital truth in a church that had been infiltrated by heretical doctrine (see 1 John 2:19). As an

eyewitness, the beloved disciple begins his book reminding his readers of the Lord Jesus, whom "we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched" (1 John 1:1 NIV). John had spent three years with Christ, and this intimacy enabled him to speak with authority.

Our focal passage begins by speaking of three witnesses that tell who Jesus is: "the Spirit, the water and the blood" (vs. 8). We wish John had given a bit more information, but one way of understanding the three would be as follows: "the water"

refers to Jesus baptism, "the blood", to his crucifixion, and "the Spirit", of course, to the Holy Spirit. When Jesus was baptized in the Jordan River, the Holy Spirit, like a dove, descended on Him. God's voice from Heaven then declared His approval of His Son (Matthew 3:13-17). And many circumstances surrounding the shedding of His precious blood at Calvary proclaimed Jesus' deity.

In verses 9-11, John points out that people sometimes accept man's testimony, but "God's testimony is greater" (vs. 9). Perhaps John was rebuking some believers who'd been led astray by the false testimony they'd heard. "Anyone who does not believe God has made him out to be a liar," he continues (vs. 10).

So what is this "testimony"? Verse 11-12 gives the answer: "God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He

who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life."

What a promise! The Life Application Bible (NIV) says this about verse 12: "You don't need to wait for eternal life, because it begins the moment you believe. You don't need to work for it, because it is already yours. You don't need to worry about it, because you have been given eternal life by God himself - and it is guaranteed."

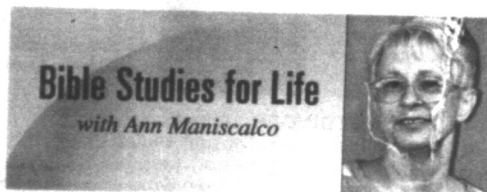
We must not miss the one criteria required to claim that assurance, how-

ever, and it is found in verse 12: "He who has the Son has life...." Have you established a relationship with God's Son? He waits - no, He longs for you to come to Him (2 Peter 3:9). If you question the Lord's lovingkindness and desire to make you a part of His family, read the tender love story in Luke 15:11-24. The prodigal son, willing to put his old life behind, exemplifies repentance, and the father's unabashed welcome reveals God's heart eager to provide restoration. In another story, we see Jesus, after redeeming a man many considered the scum of the earth, stated, "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost (Luke 19:10)."

Each of us has a choice: by faith, to receive the Lord's gracious offer, or to reject it. Hebrews 9:27-28 gives a warning and a promise: "Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgement, so Christ was sacrificed once to take away the sins of many people; and he will appear a second time, not to bear sin, but to bring salvation to those who are waiting for him."

In light of this lesson, what is God calling you to do today?

Ann Maniscalco is a member of Emmanuel Baptist Church in Ocean Springs.



Bible Studies for Life with Ann Maniscalco

Revivals & Homecomings

► **Oak Grove Church, Yazoo Association:** Revival, Sept. 20 - 23; Sun., Sunday School, 9 a.m.; worship, 10 a.m., followed by potluck lunch; nightly services, 7:30 p.m.
► **Fellowship Church, Taylorsville:** Homecoming, Sept. 13; Sunday School, 10 a.m.; wor-

ship, 11 a.m., followed by covered dish lunch.

► **Victory Church, Bassfield:** 130th anniversary, Sept. 13; services, 10:30 a.m.; Gerald Aultman, speaker; Nathan Barber, pastor.

► **New Prospect Church, Brookhaven:** Homecoming,

Sept. 13; Sunday School, 10 a.m.; worship, 10:45, followed by covered dish luncheon; Matt Greer, speaker; Buddy Reynaud, music.
► **Cumberland Church, Macon:** Revival, Sept. 13 - 16; Sun., 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon. - Wed., 7 p.m.; Willie Weddle, speaker; Donnie Buckner, music.

► **Holly Bluff Church, Holly Bluff:** Homecoming, Sept. 13; service, 10:45 a.m., followed by covered dish dinner and afternoon

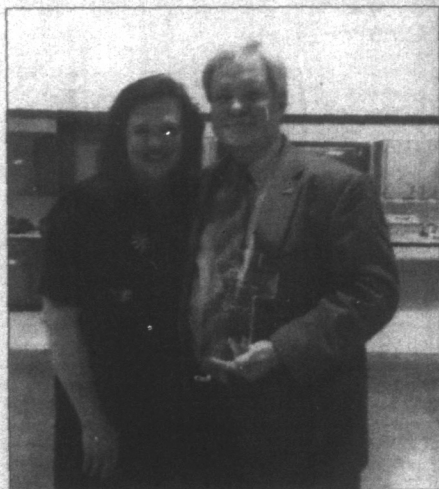
singing; Andy May, speaker.

► **Victory Church, Brookhaven:** Homecoming, Sept. 13; Sunday School, 10 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m., followed by fellowship meal; Billy Joe Deer, speaker; Landon Britt, music.

► **East Philadelphia Church, Philadelphia:** Homecoming, Sept. 20; services, 10:30 a.m., followed by fellowship meal; Dwight Faulkenberry, speaker; Gary Dover, music.

► **New Prospect Church, Oxford:** End Times Meeting, Sept. 13 - 15; regular service times Sunday, 7 p.m. nightly; Tim Moore, Lamb and Lion Ministries, and other area pastors, speaking.
► **Pleasant Hill Church, Ashland:** Revival, Sept. 14 - 16; 7 p.m. nightly; Chris Autry, Randy Buse, and Randy Hamilton, speakers; Mike Thompson and Josh Wilburn, music; Herbert Luther, pastor.

Just for the Record



NEW PROSPECT CHURCH, OXFORD, recognized Buster Wilson for 40 years of ordained service. He is shown with his wife, Pat.



ACKERMAN CHURCH, ACKERMAN, ordained Tony Fulgham as deacon. Shown are Fulgham and pastor Danny Irvin.



SUNRISE CHURCH, PETAL, ordained George Smith, fifth from right, as deacon Aug. 30.



NORTH COLUMBIA CHURCH, COLUMBIA, hosted Dennis Swanberg during their Magnificent Monday Meeting Aug. 24. Joe Wiggins, pastor.

In other Church News:

► **First Church, Waynesboro,** is hosting the Mississippi Singing Churchmen in concert Sept. 15, 6 p.m.



FAIR RIVER CHURCH, BROOKHAVEN, recently unveiled a new softball field sign dedicated to the memory of J.D. Foster, who provided the land for the field. Shown are his son Chester, widow Doris, daughter Berenda, son Dale, and pastor Jay Anderson.



EDON CHURCH, STRINGER, recently licensed Steve Holloway to the gospel ministry. He is available to serve as pastor, interim, pulpit supply, or revivals. He is shown with his wife, Lynelle.



NORTH CALVARY CHURCH, PHILADELPHIA, recently ordained Kevin Wilson and Dusty Stephens as deacons. Shown are Wilson, his wife Renea, pastor John E. Stephens, Stephens, and wife Cayla.



VICTORY CHURCH, BROOKHAVEN, honored Thomas and Ruby Wicker for 50 years of ministry. They were presented a journal Bible signed by all the guests, a pair of rocking chairs, and a love offering.

Celebrate
the **SMALL
STRONG**
CONGREGATION

SEPTEMBER 24, 2015
First Baptist Church, Jackson

YOU DON'T WANT TO MISS THIS!



Jim Futral,
Executive
Director-Texas
Ministry

You need to mark the date on your calendar and make plans to come and be ready to be blessed. In Mississippi, we have no little churches. Just ahead is the date that we are going to gather together and celebrate the small strong congregations across Mississippi. In one of our sister Southern states, the state government has an ad campaign that says in their state, "Small business is big business." In Mississippi, our strong small churches are big Kingdom business. Mark it down.

Plenary: Dr. Chuck Lawless

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To Register:
www.mbc.org/smallstrong